

Editorials are written by or approved by members of the Capital Press Editorial Board.

All other commentary pieces are the opinions of the authors but not necessarily this newspaper.

Opinion

Editorial Board

Publisher
John Perry
opinions@capitalpress.com

Editor
Joe Beach
Online: www.capitalpress.com/opinion

Managing Editor
Carl Sampson

OUR VIEW

Owyhee monument plan shelved?

Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley told OPB Sunday that Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewel told him the proposed Owyhee Canyonlands National Monument in Eastern Oregon's Malheur County has been shelved.

Merkley says he doubts President Obama will make the proclamation before leaving office Friday.

That's encouraging, but at this writing Obama still has time to make the proclamation.

Backed by the Oregon Natural Desert Association and Portland's Keen Shoes, the proposed Owyhee Canyonlands wilderness

and conservation area would cover 40 percent of Malheur County — about 2.5 million acres of what is now controlled by the Bureau of Land Management.

Residents believe the designation would be accompanied by restrictions and regulations that would prohibit or severely complicate grazing, mining, hunting and recreation.

While proponents say traditional uses of the land will be allowed, local opponents don't believe them. When the locals put it to a non-binding vote — because locals really don't get a vote — 90 percent of Malheur County voters opposed

the monument proposal.

We don't know why the proposal has been shelved, or if it really has been shelved. It could be the administration thinks the designation would be too inflammatory, given the area's proximity to the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, the site of last year's armed occupation by followers of the Bundy clan.

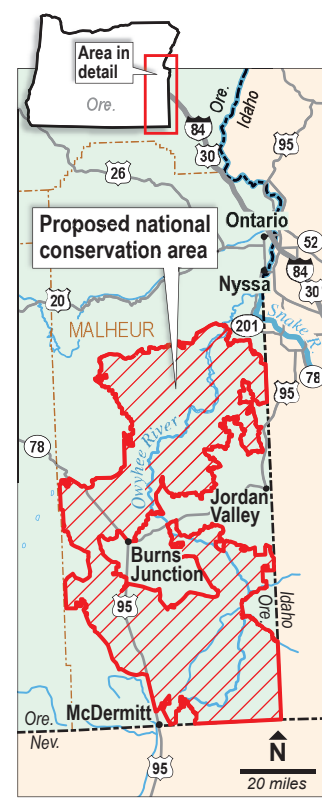
It could be Obama chose an easier target, instead expanding the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon earlier this month.

If the president doesn't proclaim the Owyhee

Canyonlands a national monument, it's a near certainty that such a designation won't be made during the Trump administration.

The president has the sole authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906 to designate land owned by the federal government as a national monument.

We are encouraged that Congress is considering curbing executive authority under the Antiquities Act, if not repealing the law outright. Congress, the affected states and local residents should have more say over such designations, and the restrictions that accompany them.



Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

OUR VIEW



What Mother Nature takes away, she can also restore

Big storms over the past few weeks have dumped enough snow and rain on California to end drought conditions in 40 percent of the state, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

Mother Nature is fickle. What she takes away she can restore with a fury.

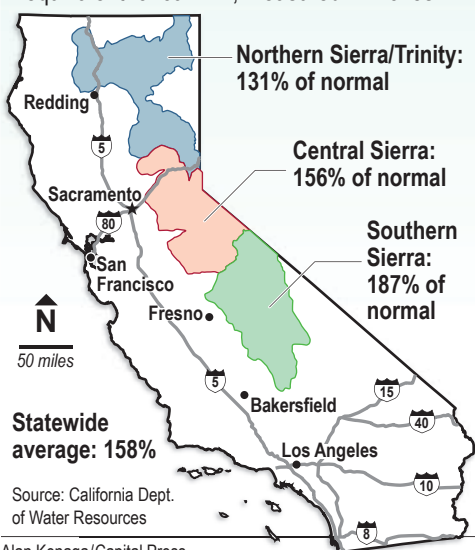
As of Jan. 13, California's snow-water content had vaulted to 163 percent of normal statewide after being just 70 percent of normal two weeks earlier.

The snow water equivalent in the Northern Sierra was 132 percent of normal, 163 percent in the Central Sierra and 197 percent in the South.

Many of California's reservoirs are well above historical averages for this time of year. Shasta Lake, the Central Valley Project's main reservoir, was at 81 percent of capacity as of Jan. 15 and 126 percent of average, while Lake Oroville, the chief reservoir for the State Water Project, was at 80 percent of capacity, or 126 percent of average, according to the Department of Water Resources.

California snow water equivalents

Percent of the historic average snow water equivalent for Jan. 11, measured in inches.



Source: California Dept. of Water Resources
Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

It's too early to entirely call an end to California's six years of drought. Winters can start wet and end dry. But in the short run it's good news for just about everyone in a state that's been parched.

We're told that the recent intense storms are something of

an anomaly, described as an atmospheric river.

Because you never know when it's going to rain and snow, it only makes sense to bank as much as you can — a little something for a non-rainy day.

In 2014 California voters approved Proposition 1, a \$7.5 billion water bond to pay for water infrastructure projects. The bond sets aside \$2.7 billion for large storage projects.

The \$3.6 billion Sites Reservoir project is one of several around the state that have been identified for potential funding under Proposition 1. Another project expected to seek funding is the \$2.5 billion Temperance Flat Reservoir near Fresno.

One way to manage our water resources is to make sure excess runoff during the wet winters is stored either in reservoirs or in aquifers. That's obvious when it's bone dry. While water appears now to be more plentiful, the exigency for more water storage still exists.

OUR VIEW

Paleo diet just another food fad

Fads come and go, and diet fads are no different. Just as poodle skirts and Bobby socks gained popularity and disappeared during the 1950s, new diet fads will come and go — as long as there's money to be made.

In a sense, diet fads are indicators of two conditions. One, people want to take good care of themselves, and will do the strangest things to do that. And two, ours is a society rich enough so we can eat anything, and as much of it, as we want. People in a Third World nation gripped by famine do not worry about whether they need to go gluten-free.

In the U.S., if people want to eat a diet of possum and grits, good for them. If they want to eat non-fat, non-GMO and non-everything else, that's fine, too.

Just don't try to argue that everyone else must follow the same regimen.

Diet fads are nothing new. A quick search of the Amazon online bookstore turned up more than 1,000 diet books of various types. They ranged from the Water Diet to the Clean Food Diet to the Bone Broth Diet — and almost everything else you can imagine. The "Badass Body Diet" was one that caught our eye.

It's clear there's no limit to the creativity of those who cook up diets. It's the American way: to come up with a shtick and try to make money from it.

One fad that has gained attention on talk shows and blogs is the Paleolithic diet. It is patterned after what was eaten during the Paleolithic period, which was between 2.5 million and 10,000 years ago. Followers of this diet forsake such foods as dairy, potatoes and grains — anything that the typical caveman would not have eaten.

It should be noted that the Paleo diet also leaves out mice, insects, tree bark and other nutrient sources that Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble may have eaten to hold them over during the long winter, when berries and other foods were not available.

Some farmers and others in the food industry rankle at the thought of someone targeting their crop as a way to sell books. We completely understand that. A dietitian will tell you that a well-rounded diet that includes all the major food groups offers the best overall health.

We agree. One problem with the fad all-or-nothing diets is they don't teach good eating habits. If a person loads up on proteins but neglects other foods, he or she will ultimately become less healthy.

It's also ironic that some food faddists pick on potatoes, which possess all of the nutrients a person needs to stay healthy. In fact, some people have lived exclusively on potatoes for years.

Food fads will continue to come and go. Today's Paleo diet will be replaced by some other diet, and that will in turn give way to something else.

As long as there's money to be made with diet and recipe books, that's the way it will go. The best diet, though, includes advice mothers have offered for millennia: All foods in moderation.

No one will ever come up with a better diet.

Readers' views

Share the joy of having wolves around

The way the state of Washington is handling wolves, people like John Browne of Vashon Island have no skin in the game.

Why don't they petition the state of Washington to import a breeding pair of wolves to Vashon Island

and every county in Western Washington? That way they could share the joy and fun that farmers and ranchers are experiencing in Eastern Washington.

Maybe it would be cheaper for the state of Washington to just sell hunting tags for wolves. Let hunters control the number of wolves killing livestock.

That way the state and communities affected by

wolves would reap some economic benefits.

Laurence C. Pederson
Carson City, Nev.

EPA protects environment

I just don't hold the same view as you regarding the EPA.

You continue to harangue about the abuses of the EPA

"going overboard" and "trying to put the screws to farmers, ranchers and foresters across the West" as per your recent editorial ("Another environmental pipe dream", Dec. 23).

In the same editorial you applaud how, when a farmer is found to be polluting, he "will do his level best to rectify it" (Cow Palace, Sunnyside, Wash.)

The inference is that the

EPA wouldn't be needed to tell the farmer to do the right thing.

It needs to be pointed out, however, that the dairy farmer didn't decide on his own to install the double liners in his storage lagoons, but rather as a result of a lawsuit settlement involving himself and an environmental group and the EPA, whose studies identified his operation to be contributing

to the polluting of neighboring residents' drinking water.

I'm sure the EPA does go overboard, but I personally view many of their rules and regulations more as "protections" for our environment and the public rather than "regulations" to put the screws to anybody.

Bruce Schwartz
The Dalles, Ore.